

Frequently Asked Jury Questions

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Answers:

1. **I received a qualification questionnaire, how do I know it's a legitimate federal form?**

Insert copy of Qualification Questionnaire

2. **Where did you get my name?**

The United States District Court randomly selects the names of our jurors from the voter registration lists for all counties located in our district. We supplement this list with 50% of our names coming from the Drivers license lists and registered I.D. holders.

3. **I have a question regarding one of the questions on the form, I'm not sure how to answer:**

The following are instructions for answering each question on the questionnaire form.

Name & address: Please make corrections to name and/or address on the front of the form.

Home, work telephone numbers: Occasionally, we have questions about information you have provided on your questionnaire. Without a telephone number the form must be returned to you for completion.

County you live in: In this district jurors report to the divisional office closest to their home. It is helpful to know which county you live in so that you can be placed in the appropriate jury "wheel".

Section A -question#1: You must be a natural born citizen or be a naturalized citizen of the United States to serve as a juror in federal court.

Question #2: Please provide the month, day and year of your birth. You may be excused if you are over 70 years old and you **request** to be excused. If you are asking to be excused because you are over 70 years old, please indicate your age and the year of your birth and then fill in the number 1 circle under section 14.

Question #3: If you answered "no" that your primary residence was not in Michigan for the last year, name the other states and/or counties of primary residence and give dates.

Question #4: Are you able to read and write with a reasonable amount of proficiency?

Question #5 & 6: Are there pending charges against you at this time? Have you ever been convicted of a crime where you could have been sentenced to one year in jail? If you answer yes to either of these questions please give more specific information regarding the offense and sentence under "remarks" on the back of the questionnaire form.

Question #7: Were your civil rights restored? That is, can you vote and hold public office?

Question #8 -Health: If you claim a mental or physical disability, please explain under “remarks” and/or enclose proof of your condition in a separate document. Please make it clear that you are asking to be excused because of your health concerns. Do not ask the court to call your doctor. Any doctor’s statement you obtain regarding your physical condition must be sent to the court by you rather than by the doctor. If you have a physical handicap or disability that would affect, but not prevent, your serving as a juror, and you are willing to serve if reasonable accommodation can be provided, please advise and explain by enclosing a separate, unattached letter.

Question #9 -Exemptions: Are you employed on a **full time basis** as a public official, police officer, firefighter, or are you a member of the armed forces of the United States?

Questions 10 & 11 -Race, gender: Federal law requires you, as a prospective juror, to indicate your race. This answer is required solely to avoid discrimination in jury selection and has absolutely no bearing on qualifications for jury service. By answering these questions you help the federal court check and observe the juror selection process so that discrimination cannot occur. In this way, the federal court can fulfill the policy of the United States, which is to provide jurors who have been randomly selected from a fair cross section of the community.

Question 12 -Occupation: Federal law requires that you answer the questions about your occupation so that the federal courts may determine promptly whether you fall within an excuse or exemption category.

Question 14 - Grounds for requesting excuse

Although there are circles numbered 1 through 10, this court allows only 4 possible categories of people who may be excused. These categories are:

- 1) Persons over 70 years of age, **who request to be excused.**
- 2) Volunteer safety personnel (must be specified)
- 3) Persons who have served on a **federal petit or grand jury** within the last two years. Serving in your county court is NOT a category of excuse.
- 4) Health

Question #15: Marital status

Question 16: Your signature, Social Security number and date: Be sure you have signed the form. If you fail to sign the form it will be returned to you for a signature. If another person had to fill out the questionnaire for you, that person must indicate his/her name, address and reason why, under “Remarks” on the back of the form.

Social security numbers are requested on a voluntary basis under authority of sections 6041 and 6109 of the Internal Revenue Code. If you earn more than \$600.00 in compensation as a juror, the court must inform the IRS using your social security number, and it is helpful to get your number now. Failure to provide your social security number at this time will not disqualify you from serving as a juror, but it may delay jury service payments to which you become entitled. This court uses an automated system which utilizes social security numbers for payments. Failure to provide your social security number will delay your payment.

4. Why must I fill out the form if I don’t live in (Grand Rapids, Lansing, Kalamazoo or Marquette)?

The state of Michigan is divided into two Districts, the Western District and the Eastern District.

Each district is divided into “divisions” with designated counties in each “division”. This, the Western District, is comprised of the following counties:

Southern Division at Grand Rapids:

Antrim, Barry, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Ionia, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa, Wexford

Southern Division at Kalamazoo:

Allegan, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

Southern Division at Lansing:

Branch, Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham

Northern Division at Marquette (includes entire Upper Peninsula):

Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft.

You must complete the form and return it even if you DO NOT live in one of the counties listed above. If you have moved from our district you will be excused upon receipt of the completed form.

5. Why does the questionnaire ask about my race and gender?

Federal law requires you, as a prospective juror, to indicate your race. This answer is required solely to avoid discrimination in jury selection and has absolutely no bearing on qualifications for jury service. By answering these questions you help the federal court check and observe the juror selection process so that discrimination cannot occur. In this way, the federal court can fulfill the policy of the United States, which is to provide jurors who have been randomly selected from a fair cross section of the community.

6. Jury duty will create a hardship for me, do I still need to fill out the questionnaire?

The only requests for excuse that will be considered at the qualification stage are the four listed under question #15 of the questionnaire. **When/if you should receive a summons you may request to be excused at that time.** Requests to be excused which are either written on the back of the form or attached to the questionnaire, will not be considered at the qualification stage.

7. There are ten “bubbles” on the questionnaire under question #15 but only four excuses listed.

Although there are circles numbered 1 through 10, this court allows only 4 possible categories of people who may be excused. These categories are:

1. Persons over 70 years of age, who request to be excused.
2. Volunteer safety personnel (must be specified)
3. Persons who have served on a **federal petit or grand jury** within the last two years.

- Serving in your county court is NOT a category of excuse.
4. Health (with proof)

This form is a standard, nationally used form. Some courts may allow more excuse categories based on the needs of their geographical area. We utilize only the first four.

8. **I need to be excused, but my reasons do not fit the four excuse categories listed under question #15.**

The only requests for excuse that will be considered at the qualification stage are the four listed under question #15 of the questionnaire. **When/if you should receive a summons you may request to be excused at that time.** Requests to be excused which are either written on the back of the form or attached to the questionnaire, will not be considered at the qualification stage.

9. **Should I call the court if I need to be excused from jury service?**

No. Jury personnel are unable to excuse you over the phone. You will be advised to complete and return the questionnaire. Written requests to be excused will be accepted at the summons stage.

10. **What if I have a planned vacation or other important event scheduled? Should I let the court know at the qualification stage?**

At the qualification stage, it is not necessary to inform the court of scheduled vacations or other significant events. Because names are drawn randomly from qualified candidates the court has no control over when, or if, you will be summoned. If you receive a summons for a time when you can not serve you can request a deferral at that time.

11. **I received a questionnaire for someone who has moved out of state, is deceased, or is in the military. What should I do?**

Please write this information on the questionnaire, sign your name and return the questionnaire to us.

12. **A qualification questionnaire came to my house for my son/daughter and they are in the military or are out of state. What do I do?**

Please write this information on the questionnaire, sign your name and return the questionnaire to us.

13. **I can not serve during a certain time during the year. Can I be sure I won't receive a summons for that time period?**

Because names are drawn randomly from qualified candidates the court has no control over

when, or if, you will be summoned. If you receive a summons for a time when you can not serve you can request a deferral at that time.

14. **I received a questionnaire addressed to John Smith. My son and I are John Smith, Sr. and John Smith, Jr. -who fills out the form?**

Because names are randomly drawn from both voter registration and driver's license lists we have no way of knowing who the questionnaire is intended for. The court is provided a list which contains only name and address. If both Jr. and Sr. are of voting/driving age then they may choose who will complete and return the form.

15. **I received a questionnaire and have lost it or it has been destroyed, can you send another?**

You may call the divisional office to request a second form.

16. **The form states I have only 5 days to return the form and the time has gone by, should I still send it in?**

You should return the form even if the time limit has elapsed. This may help avoid an order demanding your personal appearance to complete the form.

17. **What if I don't send the questionnaire back?**

If we do not receive your completed form a court order will be entered directing you to appear, at your expense, to the court for the purpose of completing the form. Any person failing to show good cause for non-compliance may be fined not more than \$100.00 or imprisoned not more than three (3) days, or both, pursuant to Title 28, USC Section 1866.

18. **I sent in my form but now I've received another!**

The court processes thousands of questionnaires at one time. Every effort is made to scan and process each form. Because forms are put through a machine sometimes forms stick together or get lost in the mail between your house and the court. Please complete the subsequent form and mail it back to the court.

19. **When will I be summoned?**

Names are randomly drawn from lists of persons found to be qualified. Due to the random nature of this draw the court has no way of telling when/if a qualified person will be summoned.

Summons Questions

1. I received a summons, how do I know it's a legitimate federal form?
2. I've received a summons, does that mean I automatically have to appear on the date printed on the summons?
3. What information do I need to return to the court?
4. Why must I serve in (Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette)?
5. What is the difference between Petit and Grand jury?
6. I can not serve on jury duty, should I call the court to ask to be excused?
7. Am I required to serve, is jury duty mandatory?
8. I realize it is my civic duty to participate in the jury process but I can't do it during the term specified on the summons, is it possible to have my jury service postponed?
9. I'm a school teacher, can I have my jury service postponed until summer?
10. What types of cases are heard in federal court?
11. What counties comprise the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette wheels?
12. I've moved out of the district, what should I do?
13. I sent in a letter to be excused. How will I know the Court's decision?
14. I received a letter stating my request to be excused was denied. I'd like the judge to reconsider. Can I send in another request?
15. I have received a summons from federal court but I just served in my local county court.
16. Why have some people never been called for jury duty?
17. What fees are paid to jurors?
18. When will I receive payment for jury service?
19. Are jury fees considered reportable income?
20. Does my employer have to pay me or at least make up the difference while I serve on a jury?
21. What protects my employment while I'm serving on a jury duty?
22. What is the number I'm supposed to call?
23. I don't understand which "juror number" I'm supposed to be listening for.
24. I keep calling the 800 number but the telephone is busy, can I find out if I'm supposed to appear any other way?
25. If I'm asked to appear for selection and must travel, where do I spend the night and how do I pay for it?
26. I've been instructed to appear, what happens on the first day that I'm there?
27. Will I ever be required to serve late in the evening or be sequestered?
28. How many days do the trials last?
29. Where do I park?
30. What should I bring with me when I come in?
31. What should I wear?
32. How long will I be at the courthouse the first day?
33. My employer wants proof that I appeared for jury duty.
34. Are jurors given breaks? Are we allowed to smoke?
35. Are there lunch facilities available or will we be expected to bring our lunch?
36. May I bring my children?
37. How can my family reach me in case of an emergency?
38. Will I be sitting around for a long time before we are taken to the courtroom?
39. What if there is bad weather on the day I'm asked to appear?
40. What is the penalty for not appearing?
41. How can I contact the jury office?

Summons Answers:

1. **I received a summons, how do I know it's a legitimate federal form?**

(Insert copy of summons)

2. **I've received a summons, does that mean I automatically have to appear on the date printed on the summons?**

Not necessarily. The court calls only the number of people needed for each selection. Therefore, you must always call the (800) number listed on your summons prior to reporting.

3. **What information do I need to return to the court?**

You must return the bottom half of the summons (the form is perforated) and the form entitled "Voir Dire Questionnaire". This questionnaire is used during the actual selection process. All participants will be required to complete the Voir Dire questionnaire prior to entering the courtroom. Delays in the selection process will occur if the questionnaire has not been completed and returned.

4. **Why must I serve in (Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette)?**

The state of Michigan is divided into two Districts, the Western District and the Eastern District. Each district is divided into "divisions" with designated counties in each "division". This, the Western District, is comprised of the following counties:

Southern Division at Grand Rapids:

Antrim, Barry, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Ionia, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa, Wexford

Southern Division at Kalamazoo:

Allegan, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

Southern Division at Lansing:

Branch, Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham

Northern Division at Marquette (includes entire Upper Peninsula):

Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft.

5. **What is the difference between Petit and Grand jury?**

The powers and functions of the federal grand jury differ from those of the federal trial jury, which is called the "petit" jury. The petit jury listens to evidence offered by the prosecution and the defense (if it chooses to offer any) during a criminal trial and returns a verdict of guilty or not guilty. The grand jury, on the other hand, does not determine guilt or innocence, but only whether there is probable cause to believe that a crime was committed and that a specific person or persons committed it. If the grand jury finds probable cause to exist, then it will return a written statement of the charges called an "indictment". After that the accused

may go to trial.

6. **I can not serve on jury duty, should I call the court to ask to be excused?**

No, ALL requests to be excused MUST be made in writing. Please, DO NOT call the court to ask if you have a legitimate reason for being excused. Federal statute requires that all excuse requests must be decided by a Federal District Judge. The jury department can not advise if you have a legitimate excuse. If you feel you have compelling reasons that you can not serve you must write your reasons and submit them in the envelope that came with your summons. If you do not have that envelope you can mail your request to the address on your summons. The only time you should call regarding an excuse is when you have a last minute emergency that cannot be handled through the mail. For your convenience this court does accept requests to be excused via e-mail.

7. **Am I required to serve, is jury duty mandatory?**

Yes. The United States Constitution guarantees the right to a trial by jury in both criminal and civil cases. Your participation as a juror helps make this possible.

8. **I realize it is my civic duty to participate in the jury process but I can't do it during the term specified on the summons, is it possible to have my jury service postponed?**

The Jury Act allows courts to grant temporary deferrals of service on the grounds of "extreme hardship or extreme inconvenience" If jury service during the time specified on your summons will create a hardship for you, you may request in writing, to be postponed to another date. Please specify the month in which you will be available. A person can be deferred only twice and then you must serve.

9. **I'm a school teacher, can I have my jury service postponed until summer?**

This court does not defer teachers to the summer months as we would have only teachers in the jury pools during that time. If you are a teacher you must serve during the term specified on your summons or you may request to be deferred to a less critical time during the school year.

10. **What types of cases are heard in federal court?**

Federal Court jurisdiction is limited to certain kinds of cases listed in the Constitution. For the most part, federal courts only hear cases in which the United States is party, cases involving violations of the Constitution or federal law, crimes on federal land, and bankruptcy cases. Federal courts also hear cases based on state laws that involve parties from different states. While federal courts hear fewer cases than the state courts, the cases they do hear tend to be of national importance because of the federal laws they enforce and the federal rights they protect.

11. **What counties comprise the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette wheels?**

Southern Division at Grand Rapids:

Antrim, Barry, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Ionia, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa, Wexford

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Northern Division at Marquette (includes entire Upper Peninsula):

Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft.

12. I've moved out of the district, what should I do?

Make a note of the county/state you now live and mail it back in the envelope provided with your summons. This information **MUST** be provided in writing.

13. I sent in a letter to be excused. How will I know the Court's decision?

Request to be excused are generally processed the day they arrive at the courthouse. All excuse requests are sent to a District Judge or Magistrate Judge for decision. The jury department will notify you by return letter of the judge's decision. You must continue to call for reporting information until you have received notification that you have been excused.

14. I received a letter stating my request to be excused was denied. I'd like the judge to reconsider. Can I send in another request?

No, once the Judge has made a decision regarding your request he will not reconsider. If your request is denied you must appear for selection (if instructed to appear when calling as required) and ask for reconsideration during the voir dire process.

15. I have received a summons from federal court but I just served in my local county court.

Jury service in a state/county court does not exempt you from serving in federal court. If you have served on a **Federal** petit/grand jury within two years you may be excused. You must write a letter giving us the information regarding your previous federal jury service.

16. Why have some people never been called for jury duty?

Eligibility for federal jury service is dependent both upon an individual meeting the legal qualifications for service and upon the **random chance of having one's name drawn** from the source lists.

Each judicial district must have a formal written plan for the selection of jurors, which provides for random selection from a fair cross-section of the community in the district, and

which prohibits discrimination in the selection process. Voter records--either voter registration lists or lists of actual voters--are the required source of names for federal court juries. This court supplements voter lists with lists of licensed drivers. A copy of this district's jury plan is available on our web-site.

17. What fees are paid to jurors?

Jurors are entitled to receive \$40.00 for each day they attend court. You will also receive .375 cents for each mile you drive to and from the court. You must keep track of the mileage you drive as you will be asked for this information when you arrive at the courthouse. If you live over 85 miles from the court in winter (November-March) or 100 miles from the court in summer (April-October) you are entitled to receive a subsistence allowance. This subsistence allowance is intended to pay for your hotel lodging and meals while appearing for jury selection or sitting on a jury.

Current Subsistence Rates:

Grand Rapids Divisional Office:	\$101.00
Kalamazoo Divisional Office:	\$ 86.00
Lansing Divisional Office:	\$108.00
Marquette Divisional Office:	\$ 86.00

You will be reimbursed the subsistence rate for each night you stay in a hotel. If you are financially unable to pay for a hotel in advance please contact the court to make other arrangements. Some local hotels will bill the court directly in the event of a financial hardship.

18. When will I receive payment for jury service?

Juror payments are processed on the 1st and 15th of each month and go out shortly (2-4 days) thereafter.

19. Are jury fees considered reportable income?

Juror attendance fees are considered "other income" by the IRS and must be reported. A 1099 form will be mailed to any/all jurors who earn at least \$600.00 in attendance fees (the \$40.00 daily allowance). This does not include reimbursement for travel or subsistence.

20. Does my employer have to pay me or at least make up the difference while I serve on a jury?

No, at this time there is no law requiring employers to do so. The majority of employers at least make up the difference.

21. **What protects my employment while I'm serving on a jury duty?**

You are protected by Federal Statute, 28 U.S.C. § 1875, from being discharged, intimidated or coerced by your permanent employer because of your attendance for service at this Court. See also MESSAGE TO EMPLOYERS in the jury information menu.

22. **What is the number I'm supposed to call?**

[Link to divisional office information](#)

23. **I don't understand which "juror number" I'm supposed to be listening for.**

Printed on your Summons for Jury service is a unique **JUROR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**, for example: 02-0039. The recorded message system uses the last two or three digits of the Juror Identification Number, so in this example the juror number to listen for would be "39". The recorded message may indicate that a group of jurors, for example, with identification numbers ranging **between** 28 and 105 are to report for service. Number 01-028 is "28" and number 01-0105 is juror "105" so all numbers falling between the two would be required to report. If you still are not sure of your jury number please call the court prior to your report date.

24. **I keep calling the 800 number but the telephone is busy, can I find out if I'm supposed to appear any other way?**

For your convenience the reporting schedule is available on this website.

25. **If I'm asked to appear for selection and must travel, where do I spend the night and how do I pay for it?**

You will have received a list of area hotels with your summons. You must contact the hotel of your choice to make reservations. You will be reimbursed the subsistence allowance. ([Link to Subsistence info](#))

26. **I've been instructed to appear, what happens on the first day that I'm there?**

You will report to the location specified on the recording. Jury personnel will check you in. You will be asked your mileage, whether or not you are a federal employee, whether you stayed in a hotel and where you parked. You will be directed to the jury assembly room where you will see a short film and orientation by jury personnel. Any questions you have will be answered at that time.

27. **Will I ever be required to serve late in the evening or be sequestered?**

Normally Court is in session from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Only in extremely rare cases will a jury be sequestered.

28. **How many days do the trials last?**

Trials can last anywhere from less than one day to several weeks in length. Our trials normally last 3-5 days. The Judge will advise you of the anticipated length of the trial during the selection process.

29. **Where do I park?**

[Hyperlink to parking information](#)

30. **What should I bring with me when I come in?**

Please bring your Jury Summons with you when you report. You may also want to bring books, magazines or study materials with you. Since the courtrooms tend to be cool, you may also want to bring a sweater or light jacket with you.

31. **What should I wear?**

Please use good judgment and dress conservatively. Appropriate dress is required. Shorts, halter/tank tops or T-shirts with slogans are not permitted. As courtrooms tend to be cool you may want to bring a sweater or light jacket with you.

32. **How long will I be at the courthouse the first day?**

You will be required to report promptly at 8:00 a.m. on your first day, unless the telephone answering device tells you another time to report. You will be checked in and receive reporting and selection instructions prior to the selection process. Jury selection normally begins at 9:00 and is normally concluded before 12:00 noon. Trials begin immediately after selection. Therefore, if you are not selected you should be excused before noon.

33. **My employer wants proof that I appeared for jury duty.**

Upon check in you will be given a work slip or attendance verification for your employer. If you are selected as a juror you will receive proof of each day's attendance on your last reporting day, at the conclusion of the trial.

34. **Are jurors given breaks? Are we allowed to smoke?**

Breaks are given both during the selection process and the trial. Smoking is allowed outside of the federal building only.

35. **Are there lunch facilities available or will we be expected to bring our lunch?**

There are restaurants within walking distance of the building or you may bring a lunch with

you. Lunch is not provided by the Court.

36. **May I bring my children?**

No, the Court has no child care facilities.

37. **How can my family reach me in case of an emergency?**

Family may call the jury office in the event of an emergency. Jury staff will notify you immediately.

38. **Will I be sitting around for a long time before we are taken to the courtroom?**

Normally jury selection begins promptly at 9:00. Occasionally, however, there are delays. Our Judges value you and your participation. We make every effort to use your time well.

39. **What if there is bad weather on the day I'm asked to appear?**

Those people who have been selected and are sitting as jurors will be notified via telephone if the trial is canceled due to weather. Persons who are supposed to report for selection should call the number listed on your summons. The message will be updated if selection is canceled.

40. **What is the penalty for not appearing?**

Any person who fails to report for jury duty will be served an Order to Show Cause. The Court will hold a hearing on the Order to Show Cause. Jurors who fail to show adequate cause for their absence can be held in contempt of court under the Jury Selection Act (18 U.S.C. 1866(g)). Penalties range from a fine of \$100. To three days in jail, or both.

41. **How can I contact the jury office?**

[Hyperlink to divisional office information](#)
